

Community Video Report

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Cable television action plan begun by D.C. City Council

D.C. City Councilwoman Antoinette Ford, who heads the Committee on Economic Development and Manpower which has jurisdiction over cable television matters, has launched a program of public education, research, and planning that she hopes will result in a cable ordinance by the end of the summer.

The program, which was announced January 25, includes the following features:

—The formation of a Community Education Cable TV Task Force that will plan and execute a campaign of education about the issues of cable TV to community groups and the general public;

—The establishment of a Technical/Legal/Business Advisory Task Force that would aid the Council in preparing materials for inclusion in an ordinance, and "to respond to issues that come from the community during the educational process";

—Public hearings—perhaps de-centralized throughout the city—that would attempt to draw a broader public involvement in this decision than has been the case in the past;

—Creation of an ordinance following the first three phases.

The Education Task Force has already been appointed and includes most of the community video and cable groups that have been in touch with her since she was appointed to chair the committee dealing with cable.

No appointments have been made to the Technical/Legal/Business Advisory Task Force, although Ms. Ford said that private communications consultant Theodore

Ledbetter has been in touch with her and will be a member. Other members could include "experts like economists, communications lawyers, and, perhaps those interested in having a franchise here."

Hearings for summer

Ms. Ford hopes that the Education Task Force, which is already planning its work, will accomplish its goal of reaching many more citizens within the District by late spring-early summer, so that the Council Committee can go to public hearings by summer. Drafting of an ordinance will follow.

Although the timetable she outlined coincides precisely with the upcoming referendum on home rule in the District and the subsequent November elections, Ms. Ford insists that cable should not become a political issue. "It would be unwise to look at this issue for political purposes, or to try to time it to come before home rule or the elections." Ms. Ford, a Republican and a relative political unknown in the District, is known to be interested in campaigning for one of the at-large seats on the Council. Attention generated by this issue would certainly not harm her.

The Community Education Task Force is temporarily chaired by Curt White, an attorney who heads the Coalition for an Equitable Share of Cable Systems, the city's primary black cable action group.

Other members include representatives from CAFAM III, Project Accountability, Washington Community Video Center—all grassroots video projects—the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum, Ft. Lincoln new



town project, Cable Communications Resource Center (a national group working for minority-owned franchises), Center for Human Development (a local government group), Office of Minority Business Opportunity, GW University Community Legal Clinic, and the Adams-Morgan Organization Cable TV Committee.

The Education Task Force has been assured by Ms. Ford that a budget for developing materials, media exposure, a videotape presentation, and a "traveling roadshow" about cable TV, among other items, is reasonable for the Council to assist in funding.

Once the Education Task Force has begun its program, the Legal/Technical/Business panel will be appointed and begin functioning, says Ms. Ford.

D.C. video coalition set for home rule tapes

By Grady Watts

Four video groups working in different neighborhoods in Washington during the last several years have formed a coalition for purposes of undertaking joint projects that are city-wide in scope. During the past, it has been difficult for video people to unite on more than an *ad hoc* basis, but the D.C. Video Coalition may change that.

The imminent referendum on the federal home rule legislation recently passed by Congress was the issue that brought together CAFAM III (working in Shaw), Project Accountability (in Anacostia), Washington Community Video Center (Adams-Morgan & central NW), and the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum. Recognizing that an urgent public education task was a priority if D.C. citizens were to make an informed vote in May on this crucial local issue, the video groups decided to band together to discuss a nationwide project with representatives of the city government.

DCVC contracted with the D.C. Bicentennial Commission to produce videotapes on the home rule bill, primarily by taping a seminar on the bill held by the D.C. City Council for community leaders.

Four tapes have been edited from the day-long session and will be distributed by DCVC member groups, as well as through the D.C. Public Library.

[continued, see COALITION, p. 7]

Theory and practice of community video

By Nick DeMartino

"Power is no longer measured in land, labor or capital, but by access to information and the means to disseminate it. As long as the most powerful tools (not weapons) are in the hands of those who would hoard them, no alternative cultural vision can succeed. Unless we design and implement alternative information structures which transcend and reconfigure the existing ones, other alternative systems and life styles will be no more than products of the existing process."

Radical Software, Vol. 1 #3

"Alternative information structures" have sprung up throughout America at an ever-accelerating pace, and, while, most share some basic assumptions, the goals, methods, and results will differ widely according to the time, place, and institutional arrangements and access to audiences they display.

The Washington Community Video Center (WCVC) opened about a year ago as a community-wide media action and training center within the Adams-Morgan neighborhood, the city of Washington, the D.C.-Baltimore metro area. Unlike video access centers in communities with cable television installed, WCVC is not primarily an equipment pool or an open access facility. Although we have been operating as a collective, our work doesn't really much resemble the videofreaky, alternative culture production collectives of the early days of video. We are independent from any institutional control, although we often work with or for such organizations. Neither are we a school in the traditional sense, nor a video theatre, although the project has elements of all of the above.

Like most groups the WCVC has access to only a limited amount of resources—equipment, staff, operating expenses, and time. Furthermore, as I discuss below, we have access to audiences only when we create the methods to reach them ourselves. Thus, our priorities have developed out of a scarcity of resources and access in our particular time and place.

Our primary goals are to develop programs that awaken or catalyze people into (1) seeing that media can be used to help them; and (2) to understand the best way to accomplish these goals with media; (3) to learn the necessary techniques; and (4) to undertake projects that will draw more people into the process.

Our work is based on a theory which says that video and other alternative uses of media must complete a *whole communications process* in order to be effective, in order to achieve goals. Video must be a complete *system*, not just in a theoretical sense, but as a practical reality.

Communications is, by definition, a two-way process, requiring *stimulus* and *response*, as Gene Youngblood has pointed out. Technologies like TV, film, newspapers, etc., which we ordinarily consider as "communications" systems, are, in fact, only one-way distribution systems for information in one form or another. They do not allow for any response, or, as it is usually called in video—*feedback*.

It is imperative to incorporate participation and feedback into any kind of video project, and that means thinking through the entire communications loop from inception of the idea through production and distribution to an audience, the method of feedback, and the effect of the whole project.

If you do that, you may discover two very general kinds of videotape categories. We have called them "process" and "product" video.

Process Video

Much has been written about the video process, the unique capability of this medium for instantaneous playback, thus instant feedback and involvement. Certainly for the average person, the idea of "seeing yourself on TV" is the most exotic and exciting aspect of video, and it is the experience which underlies both the tremendous fascination and enormous fear that various people have when being introduced to videotape. To look at yourself and others live or on tape is a startling and powerful experience—sometimes positive, often negative. We've found as a rule that kids generally love it, older people more often fear it, that the majority in between have mixed feelings, and that everyone is curious about it.

"Process video" focuses upon and explores the potential of the video *experience* in its many shapes and forms. The primary object is the interaction between the person or group and the machine. The value of process video is almost exclusively to the participants, although tapes from "process" events can be interesting and worthwhile. "Process" video always takes into account that the presence of the machine alters the experience.

We have done many process videotapes. In July the WCVC opened a Video Theatre. We advertised in the *Daily Rag*: "Neighborhood Television: Free!! Every Tuesday

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Health maintenance, patient education start moving in U.S.

By Ray Popkin

Policy at the national, state and local level in health maintenance education and patient education—and the positions taken by various institutions on these issues—will have a direct impact on the ability of local groups to develop health communications programs utilizing video, cable, and other audiovisual techniques. We are passing along the following summary of major policy developments in hopes that fellow health communicators can better plan their programs, concepts, and funding strategies. We hope that this report will encourage greater input by health communicators in development of these policies.

The popularity of health maintenance education and patient education among medical institutions has taken a dramatic upturn during the last year.

Health maintenance education teaches the public to be members of an expanded health team that has knowledge of good health techniques that can prevent numerous types of illness and respond competently to emergencies and minor illnesses. Patient education assists people who have already contracted diseases in getting well and subsequent prevention.

Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs), which are prepaid health care programs, have displayed the most interest in health maintenance education, since their survival will depend on keeping the patient healthy rather than by treating the patient once they are sick.

HMOs based on prevention

Since HMOs provide unlimited service for a basic fee, their profit margins will depend on the success of preventative measures they offer to the public.

The Georgetown University Medical School has two HMOs which have been teaching what is probably the most innovative patient education program in the country. Patients are being trained to use a stethoscope to detect early signs of heart and respiratory trouble and are also learning health consumerism, first aid and basic Symptomology. Dr. Keith Sehntert who is the primary health educator and curriculum designer for the program hopes to transfer sections of the material to video media sometime in the future for use around the country.

Rural states need maintenance

Rural Health systems are also especially interested in health maintenance education. In rural areas this is especially important as the major portion of population lives far from medical services. The Mountain States Regional Medical Program (RMP) is seeking ways to broadcast and cablecast such materials throughout Wyoming to people who can't leave their ranches for periods as long as five months during the winter. There is also a high incidence of strep throat in the area, which could be detected by the home health practitioner. In New Mexico, the RMP is researching new systems for rural health care delivery in consultation with the MITRE Corporation, one of the developers of two-way cable technology. They hope to incorporate a variety of health education, long distance tele-diagnosis, and interactive communication systems in their program.

Health Systems, Inc. in Boise, Idaho, has initiated a series of education programs entitled "The Parents' Role in Health Care." It will deal with mental health, nutrition, emergency treatment, accident prevention, eye care, dental care and consumer issues. They have already made arrangements to have the sections of the course video taped in color so that they will be available for a small fee to other organizations in the country.

The American Hospital Association has taken a strong stance in the area of patient education by establishing a special health Ed. section. They have also recommended the formulation of a national clearing house for consumer health education, and the training of health Education practitioners.

The Health Facilities Service which represents Medicare, Blue Cross, the AMA, and AHA and Health Insurance Council has also approved a resolution making patient education, when prescribed by a doctor for alleviation of specific conditions, a reimbursable expense under insurance programs.

Resistance from profession

While all this seems encouraging, there is still a lot of resistance among the older established ranks of the medical professions such as State Medical Societies. For instance the District of Columbia Medical Society which controls the purse strings of the D.C. area Regional Medical Program has forbidden the local RMP to expend any energy in the area of health maintenance or patient education, in fact research that was at one time conducted by the D.C. RMP has been destroyed. In other areas, programs in health maintenance are being attacked on such grounds as being solicitation of clients for doctors, which is considered unethical.

Even President Nixon seems to support health education. In Feb., 1971, in his health message to Congress he stated "It is

behavior, yet the whole field of health education is fragmented, uneven in effectiveness and lacks any base of operations. . . . The U.S. Office of Education in a report prepared for the Committee, could not cite a single program of research or evaluation it is supporting in the area of school health education. . . ."

The letter also states that of \$75 billion spent for health care only four percent was spent on prevention with health education getting only a small portion of that money. Of the \$18.2 billion allocated in 1973 from the federal budget less than one-fourth of one percent was allocated for health education. On the state level, the letter points out, less than half of one percent is spent on education.

Overall the report makes a lot of excellent recommendations as well as some that have raised conflict within the Commission itself. In any case there is no way really delineated for these recommendations to be put into effect. The major recommendation is for the establishment of a "National Center for Health Education" which would be a part federal/part privately funded institution. This center would be charged with developing research programs in health education, reviewing programs and sponsoring demonstration programs. There was some conflict in the Commission on how this Center would be accountable to the public. In the President's Feb. message to Congress on health care, he asked that the Center for Health Education be established with

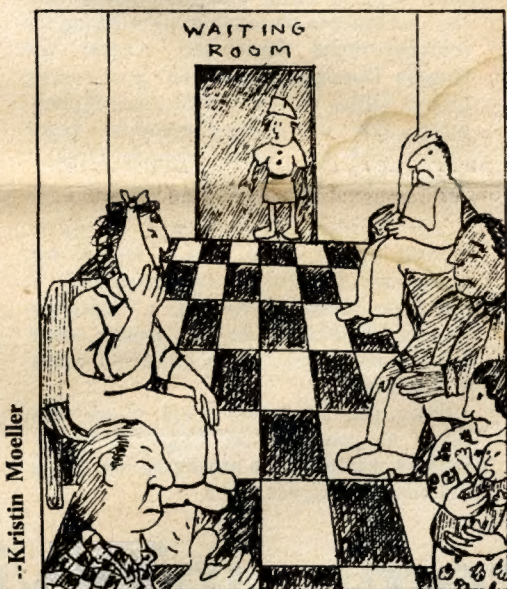
stereotyped and irrelevant to many of the people to whom it was shown.

In the President's Report to Congress he also asked that an Office of Health Education be set up within H.E.W. "to coordinate the fragmentation of efforts". Hopefully this Office will in fact give encouragement to the many people within H.E.W. who wish to support such programs but who have had no agency vehicle through which to do so.

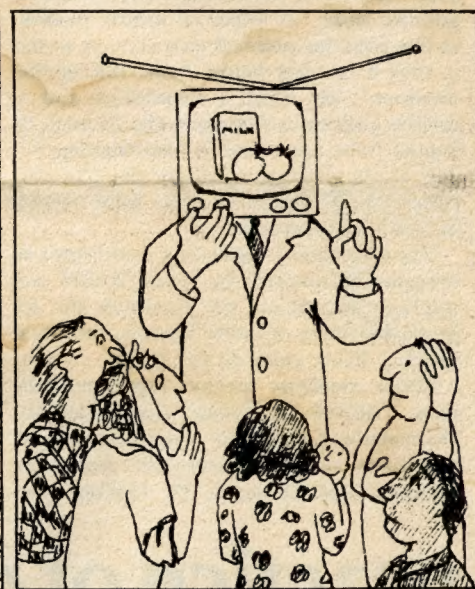
Health educators organize

Health Education Media Association is a new organization which has been formed to support health educators both in the area of continuing education for professionals and in the areas of health education for consumers. Their convention convenes in Atlantic City on March 16, and they are featuring a half day session devoted entirely to patient education. The panel features Arthur Dimmit director of the "Health Education for the Public" program of the RMP in New Mexico, and Robert E. Potts, Ph.D., director of the Ohio State University patient education network which is probably the biggest patient ed program in the country.

HEMA also hopes to start working on an evaluation service of available instructional materials, which has long been awaited by many who have tried to wade through tons of materials to find one film or video tape of



--Kristin Moeller



in the interest of the entire country, therefore to educate and encourage each of our citizens to develop sensible health practices. Yet we have given remarkably little attention to the health education of our people." (Since that time we know of no new H.E.W. funding in the area of health education.)

President's Committee on Health Education

A Presidential commission was established called the President's Committee on Health Education. This commission held hearings throughout the country and sent out 600 questionnaires asking about current health education practices. In the letter of transmittal to the President the commission states "Unfortunately, the important, and often crucial role the individual can play in maintaining his own health has rarely been clearly explained or adequately dramatized."

"Our findings regarding the ignorance or apathy or both of American institutions and organizations, indeed, the public at large toward health education are chronicled in the body of our report. . . . While the need and demand for health care services have been rising, health education has been neglected. Many, perhaps most, major causes of sickness and death can be affected—and some prevented by individual

federal support only in the launching phase, with the private sector later taking control of the entire operation. It is unclear how this organization will function at this point. Our hope is that it will include representatives of community-based organizations as well as people who are involved in telecommunications for it is developing communications systems such as CATV that offer real possibilities to reach millions of people with detailed and consistent quantities of health education materials. Health practitioners are relatively uneducated as of this point as to the great potential of cable to enhance health services.

The President's Commission also recommended among other things the adoption of model state laws for school health education, tax incentives for employee health training programs, training programs for health education specialists, the consultation with consumers on the location of and services offered by new facilities, and the identification of those health problems which can be most readily affected by education programs. The report also identifies the need for specific programming for different cultural and economic groups, finding that much of the material was

use in their program. They will also be conducting regional workshops on various aspects of health communication. Members are entitled to a free subscription to **Biomedical Communications, Hemagrams** and reduced fees for conferences and workshops. (Membership is regular \$25, Students \$10 Sustaining \$100) Their address is P.O. Box 5744 Bethesda, Md. 20014.

Resources:
Biomedical Communications covers all the new developments in medical education both patient and professional 4 times a year cost \$5,750 Third Ave. N.Y., N.Y. 10017.

Selected References on Patient Education H.E.W. pamphlet no (HRA) 74-4001 U.S. dept. of H.E.W., Health Care facilities Service, Office of Training and Education 5600 Fishers Lane Rockville, MD. 20852.

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Resource List of Programs for Nursing and Related Health Services. Mrs. Phyllis Duke, T.V. Coordinator for Nursing, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, Francis Cunningham Bldg. Milwaukee Wis. 53201.

Telecommunications and Health Services (See Book Review Section) Abt Associates Inc. Good basic introduction to applications of telecommunications to health problems.

Mary Heider, PhD Dept. of Biomedical Communications, College of Medicine Eden and Bethesda Avenues, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219. These folks have one of the most exciting patient education programs in the country and have their work well documented. They have reports on viewer response, influence of video tapes on attitudes, video course outlines and video resource lists.

[Note : Next issue we will feature an article by Janice Cohen, who is working on a women's self-help tape at Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York City.

Basic video systems and some new developments

By Ray Popkin

This feature is designed to help the beginner set up a video system, and to give reviews of new equipment and hardware developments from our experiences. Readers are welcome to feedback and to add their experiences.

Basic Systems: Where to start

A video system is the entire production system, not just a single porta-pak, that is, a system capable of producing edited video tapes of at least cablecast quality. Most folks start off with a porta-pak, which is the workhorse of the video movement. A porta-pak is a half inch recorder and camera system that operates on both household current and batteries. Lightweight and easily carried on the back or shoulder, this system can record video and audio and play it back immediately, to insure satisfactory image and sound. It is the most flexible tool in video, as it can record both in rooms and houses as well as in forests, on boats, planes, deserts, donkeys, ditches and dumbwaiters. We use it to gather all our raw video information prior to editing. The careful porta packer can actually produce fairly good tapes on the porta pak alone if they record segments in order and carefully plan shots. It is also a valuable tool on its own in feedback situations where you want to see what's happening immediately, as in therapy, dance, plays, meetings etc.

Two important elements of any video system (and two which are often neglected by beginners) are sound and lights. So many new videomakers make tapes which are unreadable because the lighting is terrible or the soundtrack is garbled or faint. Any tape worth making is worth lighting and miking properly, which means an investment in a light kit, mikes, mike mixer, stands and cables.

Most people want to edit their tapes, in order to eliminate the extraneous information that puts people to sleep, to reorder the scenes in an exciting way, and perhaps to add new sound and still photograph elements. Editing requires two machines—one "slave" and one "editor." The image is transferred through sound and picture cables electronically from slave to editor in the desired order, and with various special elements depending upon the machines' capabilities. (Much in the same way as editing audio tape)



Following is a suggested initial budget for video production. Admittedly, many people work with less, or borrow parts of a system. But, if you're serious about video being more than just home movies, be prepared to acquire:

1 Porta-pak	\$1700
1 Editing deck	1700
1 Slave deck	800
3 Monitors	800
Sound	300
Lights	350
Cables, cords, misc.	300

Total system \$6000

These prices are not iron-clad, by the way. Often, a dealer will strike a deal, particularly if you are buying a lot of equipment and/or spending cash.

In fact, selecting a dealer may be the most important decision you make, since you must consider maintenance rates, service quality, convenience and geographic proximity, and flexibility of the dealer. (Next issue we will deal with dealers.)

The above system is only a beginning system. Any more sophisticated system, like multiple cameras, special effects generators, time-base correctors, etc., should be researched carefully. (See below.)

The beginner should definitely do further reading before launching into a serious investment in hardware.

Further Reading

Video Tools, a catalog put out by the CTL Electronics and including articles by various New York video people, is an excellent compendium of hardware facts and prices.

Spaghetti City Video Manual (N.Y.: Praeger) by the Videofreex, is a beginner's guide to (primarily) Sony half-inch video equipment. The manual is technically oriented—that is, it explains what video electronics is and how it works—rather than explaining the process of video production and production techniques and problems. Contents: Hardware, Notes on editing, cables, videotape, basic maintenance, broadcasting and cablecasting half-inch tapes.

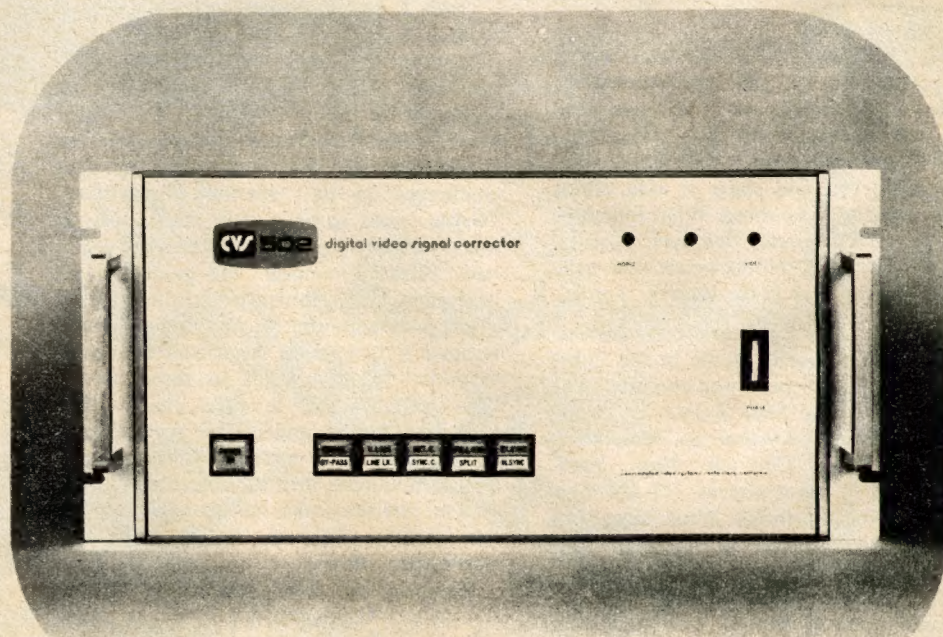
Tab books, (Blue Ridge Summit, Pa.) publishes good technical books on the basics of TV production, CATV system design, basic and advanced TV electronics. The drive from Blue Ridge Summit to Frederick, Md. is quite beautiful.

Making the Media Revolution by Peter Weiner (NY:Macmillan) is subtitled "A complete guide to cameras, lenses, lighting, sound, animation, directing, editing, special effects and graphics." A general introduction or overview might be a better description. Although in style it comes on like an updated version of the TV production handbook, it does try to give the beginner a comprehensive look at the elements that go into tape production, concentrating on half-inch. The drawback is its sort of traditional, academic approach, the title notwithstanding.

New Developments

Although half-inch video was never made for commercial production or to create technically high-quality programs, the push by the video movement on hardware manufacturers is beginning to have results. Improvements in signal processing equipment, editing and color technology will put a complete, broadcast quality 1/2 inch color system on the market by 1975. Components of this complete system are now appearing and we would like to give you our exposure so far.

A word about how this process occurs: it's clear that Sony, the largest manufacturer, was not interested in applying their best technology to the half-inch medium. The change has come as a result of a combination of pressure from us, the expansion of the video movement into a viable market that could support and demand high quality portable systems, competition from smaller manufacturers like Akai (who developed the first \$3000 color camera), and the rash of dealers who were willing to modify half-inch to perform the jobs we need. This is a helluva way for our production needs to be met, and we all



know that we continue to be at the mercy of the manufacturers, who determine our technical, and, thus, our creative potential.

Editing

Everyone who has pulled out hair trying to edit half-inch tape will be glad to know that automated systems are now available. These systems control two machines from one panel, back-timing them automatically and running them forward to make the edit. A one-week job can be done in a day. The first to appear were expensive, computerized jobs that counted frames and put a pulse on each frame where an edit was to be made. They work only with solenoid-operated VTR system. Videographe in Montreal has come up with a system for half-inch and is making the schematics available (for more info., see **Rad Software**, vol. 2, no. 5). Another system is being designed in California and may cost \$600. We have seen the SpectraVision Corp.'s system, which runs close to \$3,000, but does an excellent job. It runs the machines backwards at the same rate they run forward, counting the frames that pass the capstan. It runs both machines backwards the same number of frames. A roll button is pushed, the machines run forward, and the edit is made automatically.

Editing Decks. The TC3130 is a Panasonic 3130 modified by Technisphere in New York to allow video-insert editing. They add a circuit and a switch so that video images can be inserted without disturbing an audio track. The insert-out delay is eliminated as well as the sound pop which occurs in the 3130 at editing points. These features were only available before on one-inch systems costing \$4,000. Sony is coming out with three new decks. The one-inch 340 color editor is a good machine with a counter that goes down to tenths of seconds and has two sound tracks. Unfortunately, I didn't see a third-generation tape from this machine, which is crucial for one-inch (since any tape edited on one-inch must be dubbed down to half-inch again for viewing). However, many friends have compared it favorably to the equivalent IVC one-inch.

Sony is also producing an complete cassette editing system, featuring a vertical interval editor (edits on the frame lines, eliminating tear or flash at the edit points), and a back spacing system for automated editing. The whole system, including two VTRs and the backspacer will go for \$12,000. Sony is also coming out with an 8650 half-inch editor with vertical editing. When it will come out is unknown. (Many folks are still waiting for Panasonic to make good on their promise that the 3150 solenoid editor would come out a year and a half ago.) We all know these companies don't consider half-inch a priority, but the introduction by Sony of the 3/4 inch format

was the clincher. The quality available on 3/4" could be attained on half-inch, by flooding the institutional market with 3/4", Sony has multiplied the number of formats that we are stuck with.

Color is here! And I expect we will all be getting into it soon. Our recommendation is caution: in every beginning phase of new development the first buyers have been guinea pigs. We have made the mistake of grabbing up one of the first of a new line before, only to have it recalled for rework. Magnavox and Akai have had color camera in the \$3000 range for about a year and Akai has a complete quarter-inch system. ABC-TV is experimenting with the Akai camera and (rumor has it) Panasonic porta paks. We understand they are shooting with these tools and time-base correcting the material to broadcast quality. Most people we know prefer the Akai color rendition over the Magnavox but others say the Magnavox is sharper. The panasonic portable camera is about to appear that matches up with the porta pak which is already out.

JVC is the only company that we know of with a complete color half-inch portable system in production. It consists of VTR camera and Color Control unit. Cost is estimate at about \$7,000 the nice thing about it is that the VTR seems adequate as a slave deck in editing. It looks nice in the brochure at any rate. The Shibadan Company is set to announce what it bills as its "Electronic journalism system" which features camera and recorder and accessories for about \$20,000. This system is designed basically for broadcast use in a fast-news situation. Our prediction is a good \$5,000 system within a year for closed circuit or CATV use.

Time-Base Correction

A time-base correction is a unit that replaces all the electronic information that controls the picture with a broadcast-grade signal. Half-inch video, which was not designed to render a high-grade signal, suffers from various problems like the stretching of videotape, motor speed variation, heads dragging across the tape, temperature variation, and weak batteries. As a result, the pulses and line that make up the picture are recorded at uneven intervals or are improperly aligned. By running the tape through a time-base corrector (TBC), the quality should be better than the original, and suitable for two-inch, broadcast quality play. A processing amplifier will rectify some of these problems, but will not bring the signal up to broadcast quality.

[Continued, see **HARDWARE**, p. 7]

News from the circular file

By Nick DeMartino

Trying to keep up with the latest books and publications in the communications field is a full-time job, and, I daresay, none of us really does it to our own satisfaction. But the least we can do is pass along what we have learned and share it with others trying to do the same thing. What follows is a selection of what seems right now to be the most significant of the materials that have passed over my desk in the last few months.

A number of useful items in the cable access field have come out recently. *The Wired Island: The First 2 years of public access to cable television in Manhattan* (Fund for the City of New York, 1133 Avenue of the Americas, NY 10036) is a report by David Othmer. While lots of our friends in the public access movement have complained about various aspects (particularly the recommendations section), it certainly provided for me a coherent and extensive review of the first two years of public access in its first real big-city test. Aside from useful statistics, lists of user groups, problems encountered, appendices of regulations and so forth, the author has tried to give some flavor of the chaos and energy that characterized the public access scene. He has done a better job of the former than the latter, a job which requires less "objectivity" and more detailed, impassioned explication, but it is certainly the best existing descriptive document available to the general public about real life experience with cable access. The **Public Access Celebration** in New York also has a report available which does provide more detail and a clearer point of view...A Ph.D. thesis by Gil Gillespie of the University of Kansas entitled *The Apparent Viability of the Public Access [Community Cable Television] Idea in Urban North America* is based on survey work with local access groups throughout the U.S. and Canada, as well as research of his own. Students of public access will find this study valuable as a first attempt at some assessment of how access has worked during its initial phases. Unfortunately, these dissertations are somewhat less than accessible. Gillespie can be reached at 1800 Naismith Dr., #902, Lawrence, Kan. 66044 for further information...An upcoming series of publications by the **Alternate Media Center**, the best-funded and one of the earliest of the public-access groups in New York promises to give the sort of in-depth treatment that the NY city studies offer for some of the access experiments. For the royal sum of \$35, AMC is offering a series of books, including an access workbook, "Public Access Experience—profiles of 6 AMC Centers", 1974 Supplement on Library Access, the 1975 Supplement on Educational Access, and "Telemedicine—The Current Experience." Write AMC, 144 Bleeker St., New York 10012. Another kind of publication dealing with access is an Aug. 1973 booklet about access in Madison, Wis., from the Citizens Cable Council. Called the *Madison/Dane Co. Community Action Handbook*, it is full of clippings and letters and info about that access project (from P.O. Box 5574, Madison, 53705).

There have been several new books on aspects of regulation, among which the most general is *The Politics of Broadcast Regulation* by Erwin G. Kraskow and Lawrence D. Longley (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1973). The authors, one of whom is a member of the FCC bar, the other a political scientist with expertise in interest-group politics, have presented a theory of policy-making in broadcast issues that try to make sense out of determining "who got what, when, and how."

Cable Television and the FCC: A Crisis in Media Control by Donald R. LeDuc (Philadelphia: Temple, 1973) is a full-length treatment of the case of cable television regulation at the FCC, with an eye toward how this case illustrates the incapacity of the Commission to deal with new technical challenges to its "cliente industries." "Cable seems to have been released, as it was previously repressed, not because policy had been developed to guide it in performing communications functions essential to the American public, but simply because a process of legal and economic assimilation had blunted its threat to the broadcast industry it once challenged," LeDuc concludes, and further recommends seeking alternative methods of introducing new technologies into the electronic media system, now that cable has become a part of the existing structure. An excellent and challenging study.

Another book dealing with cable edited by RAND Corporation consultant Rolla Edward Park is the outgrowth of a meeting of the Western Economic Association in 1972. *The Role of Analysis in Regulatory Decisionmaking: The Case for Cable Television* (Lexington, Mass: D.C. Heath & Co.) assesses the affect of the masses of studies, analysis and thinktankery on the FCC cable television rules adopted in 1972. Even more specific and detailed than LeDuc, the book is geared toward those interested in economic analysis and administrative law.

For those who are interested in another piece of recent history in the CATV regulatory field, the city of Boulder has done up its ordinance in a nice little book with some information about the unique negotiation process that led to the final law. Available from **Boulder County Cable Communications Project**, Municipal Building, Boulder, Colo. 80302.

A Boulder system, however, will not be built by TelePrompster, due to the latter's financial woes. In Boston, cable will be delayed because the city has concluded that it won't do enough for the city at the current time. The Nov. 1973 *Report of the Boston Consumers Council to the Mayor on CATV* is available from the Council, City Hall, Boston, Mass. 02201.

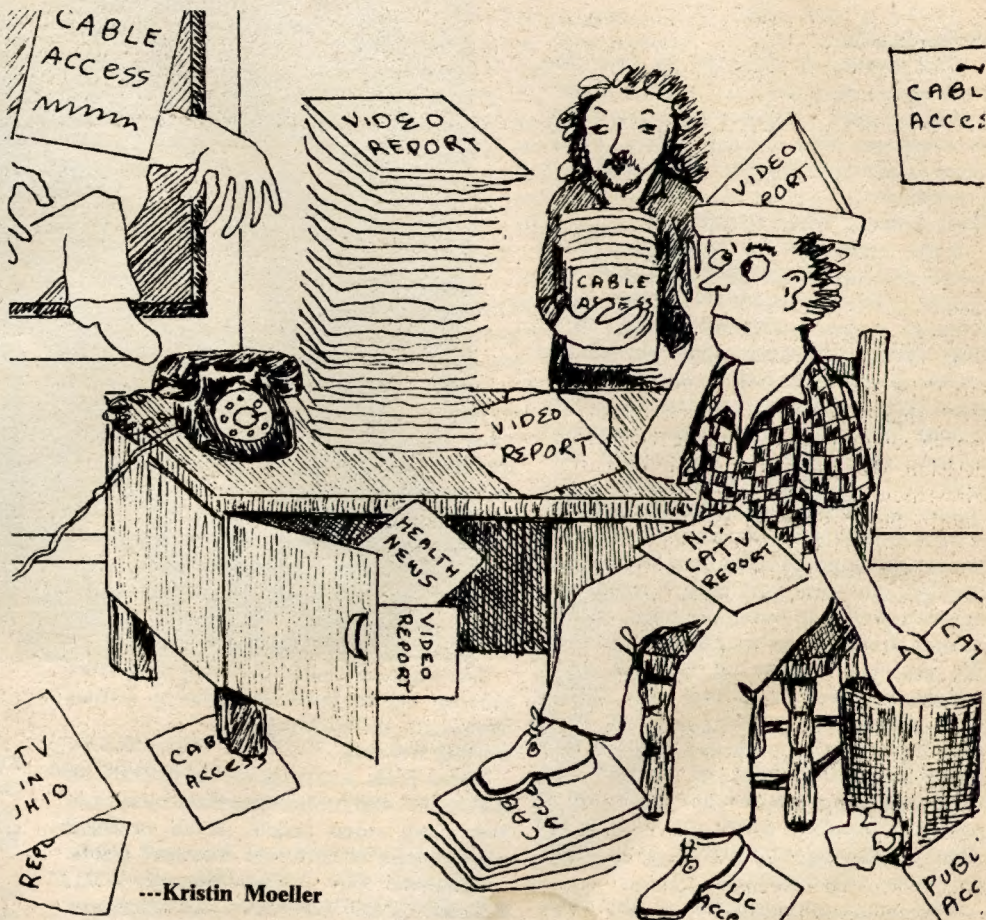
The whole question of cable economics is central to the development of any system, and one group offers information and a service that is designed to assist local organizations to plan an economic simulation of a cable system based on local characteristics. **Whitewood Stamps, Inc.** 61 Chapel Street, Newton, Mass 02158, provides a computer service, a simulation program, a videotape about cable economics. Write for their brochure and publications.

Pity the poor beginner, the layperson who is interested in learning more about issues in communications like cable television, access to broadcast media, minority and women's hiring, or any of the many other issues in the exploding field of telecommunications.

Pity the poor beginner, because, by and large, the "field," almost by definition, is dominated by specialists who all read the same periodicals, attend the same conferences, keep track of the major reports and proposals—all to the befuddlement and exclusion of the average person.

What follows is an eclectic selection of materials that will at least give the newcomer a broad background in the field of media and communications.

Perhaps the most comprehensive (and longest) general academic study of the broadcast field is Eric Barnouw's three-



---Kristin Moeller

A full-scale economic study done for a community development corporation in South Bronx, N.Y., concludes that subscriber-oriented services will not be sufficient to make cable TV viable there, and provided a careful look at utilizing institutional services as a way of financing cable in a low-income, densely populated inner-city situation. The study, is also one of the best introductions to cable economics I have yet seen for the layperson, because it relates to a specific situation and is designed to convince you of a particular perspective on cable—one which has yet to be understood by many franchising officials—that cable is more than an entertainment medium. Write for *Cable Communications System for the South Bronx Community: Technical and Economic Analysis*, by Arawak Consulting Corp., and Telecommunications Management Corp. (South Bronx Community Corporation, 384 E. 149th Street, Bronx, N.Y. 10455. Jan. 1973).

These books, however, tend toward the obscure, and are of almost no value to the beginner or to anyone trying to work with laypeople and the public. This is not the case with a series of reports issued this fall by the RAND Corporation under contract with the National Science Foundation. The bulkiest of the set, and the best introduction

to the current thinking in cable is Walter Baer's *Cable TV: Handbook for Decision-makers*, which, as the title indicates, is designed for policymakers at the local level who are trying to sort covering public access, educational and municipal uses, cable technology, and other topics, are more uneven in their usefulness. But none are couched in the annoying lingo of the field or the legal/technical jargon of government bureaucrats. Thank God for small favors.

In the great tradition of NACLA and other left-wing research groups, the Network Project has been issuing a series of reports on all sorts of communications issues, and their work is first-rate. Cable Television is Issue #5 of the *Notebook* series, which also includes numbers on domestic communications satellites, a directory of the networks, control of information, Office of Telecommunications Policy, and the Children's Television Workshop. No matter how readable and accessible RAND documents become, they are still RAND documents, and as such, reflect the bias of a research institution that has until recently, applied its considerable analysis skills almost exclusively to problems of military, strategic, and

[continued, see REVIEWS, p. 7]

For the beginner: guerilla warfare

volume *History of Broadcasting* (Oxford). While he doesn't really get into the kind of radical analysis many of us might like, he covers virtually every major development and theme of the development of the industry from year one. A shorter and sharper critique of the industry is Herbert Schiller's *Mass Communications and the American Empire*, which chronicles the domination of U.S. business and the military in the world development of television and other communications systems.

More theoretical and controversial are the many books by media theorist and pop sociologist Marshall McLuhan, most notably *Understanding Media* (Signet/Mentor or McGraw Hill). A more recent and more readable McLuhan-ish treatment of new developments in media is Gene

Youngblood's *Expanded Cinema*. Both suffer from a belief that somehow the technology *per se*, not the political and economic structures that spawn technologies, will determine the structure of society.

An extremely useful new paperback anthology called *Human Connection and the New Media* by Barry Schwartz (Prentice-Hall/Spectrum, 1973) focuses on precisely this conflict: between those who feel the technology is the determinant, and those who claim that industry and other politico-economic control will prevail. In addition, there are chapters on such new subjects as bio-feedback, telepathy, holography, videotape, cable television, cybernetics, etc.

If you want to deal with the whole area of videotape use and development, you'd do well to see the early issues of a journal (still

Cable

A more recent book that attempts to cover all the major issues is the RAND Corporation's **CATV:Handbook for Decision-Makers**, by Walter Baer (avail. direct from RAND at 1700 Main Street, Santa Monica, Calif). Aimed at officials and others involved in the cable TV franchising process, it is extremely specific and useful, and avoids many of the sort of self-serving generalizations that pepper most industry-oriented studies.

Feminist video in D.C.

by Vicki Costello

Feminists in D.C. are moving together to take some control over the information going out about our movement. Too often women's struggles and growth are being ignored or misrepresented by the established networks as well as by alternative media structures. We feel that we must be able to produce and distribute information that reflects our lives.

With this goal in mind, many D.C. Feminists have turned to 1/2" video as a means to our own creative expression. Other local women are working through legal means to change the unfairness to women in network T.V. hiring and programming content. Both levels of activity are integral to the future of the women's movement and a fair media.

In an effort to publicize the groups involved legally and in tape production we've compiled the following listing:

Feminist Video at the Washington Community Video Center—Women working out of the Center are producing their own tapes and holding regular Feminist Video Screenings for the Community. Video workshops are given periodically, contact the Center for info. Tel. 462-6700. Tapes available: **Women's Self Help**, **Feminist Counseling**, **An Alternative**, and **Self-Defense for Women**.

Feminist Media Project, which includes **Radion Free Women** working out of radio station WGTB, 90.1 FM and the **Spectra Video Collective**, an independent radical feminist video group. Their priority, next to making tapes, is to get women into the technical-electronic side of the video process. To help women do so, they give workshops monthly. For info, on workshops and/or tapes contact: **Spectra Video Collective**, 1629 16th St., NW Wash. D.C.



Tapes available: **Automechanics I**, and **Women's Cable TV Channel in Memphis**.

Electra Video—A loosely related group of feminist videotape makers. Tapes available: **The Abortion March 1972**, **The American Univ. Women's struggle for a Gynecologist**, **Earth Union**, **Women's Theater**, **Open Classroom**, and **The Closing of Jackson School**. For info, on tapes contact **Electra Video**, 3518 35th St., NW Wash. D.C. Also available from same address, **The Emerging Woman** by the Women's Film Project. It's a 40 min. b & w, 16 mm film on U.S. Women's History.

Women's at Antioch's Videoball—Tapes available: **Abortion 1973**, follows a woman through her entire process of having an abortion. Also: **Christine**, about a Georgetown drag queen, and **Katherine's Morning**. For tape and other info, contact **Jamie**

Robinson, 1033 St. Pauls St., Baltimore, Md. 301-685-0777.

Women involved in the legal struggles include:

NOW Women's Task Force on TV station WRC license challenge—Contact: 387-6895.

NOW National Women's Task Force on the FCC and Broadcasting—Deals with license challenges, affirmative action plans and questions of ownership. Contact: 387-6895.

Women in Cable—Researching potential of future D.C. Cable system in regards to Women. Contact: **Sally Banks Craig**, 362-7192.

Women at the Wash. Community Video Center are eager to set up communication and tape exchange with other Women in video. Please contact us through the center, if interested.

A.C.T. convention in D.C.

Action for Children's Television (ACT) one of the most effective public-interest action groups in the media field, is holding its International Festival of Children's Television at the Kennedy Center on March 31, April 1-2. In addition to screenings of various kinds of children's programs, workshops and panels will be held. Registration, free to students, can be entered with ACT, 46 Austin St., Newtonville, Mass. 02160.

By the way, an ACT-generated book called **Children's TV: The Economics of Exploitation** by William Melody (New Haven: Yale, 1973) is not only a great primer on the issues involved in television for youngsters and the ACT response, but sheds light on the way the broadcast regulatory policy functions in Washington.

G.W.U. law students

WATCH (Watchers Against Television Commercial Harassment), a group of George Washington University law students, has petitioned the FCC to limit commercial interruptions on television to the hour and half-hour and to provide a three year timetable for the reduction of commercial time to 8 minutes per hour. The group, led by consumer activist Prof. John Banzhaf, cited the "rising wave of viewer discontent" and "the inability of the broadcast industry to regulate itself" as the reasons for immediate FCC action.

The petition suggests that television stations initially be required to limit commercials to 9 minutes, 20 seconds during prime time and to 14 minutes at other times. After 3 years, the eight minute standard would go into effect.

The petition would also ban all advertising during children's programming on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Exemptions would be extended to public service announcements, editorials, political spots, and counter-commercials.

Reprint, **The Daily Rag**

WCVC self-report

WCVC is in the midst of a lot of activity and growth. With expanding people-energy we're reaching into more and varied sectors of the D.C. community with particular emphasis on the Adams-Morgan area where we are based. Certain tape productions we've contracted with national and local organizations are giving us part of the necessary funding with which to sustain the Center and our other community-related video projects. More economic aid is continually being sought for subsistence and expansion of our activities. Part of the staff is actively involved with the Cable in D.C. issue, currently under investigation by municipal authorities. A report on the latest developments on the cable is included in the newsletter.

Software

Our most recently taped productions include:

The Citizen's Energy Conference: (Feb. 16-18) A national assembly of representative citizens and political/ecological groups investigating the current energy crisis. Tapes are available of speakers including: **Ralph Nader**, **Barry Commoner**, **Ron Dellums** and others. Also there are VTRs of workshops dealing with specific issues and possible strategies for citizen redress of problems such as the raising of public utilities rates. The tapes are designed for use by regional conferences, concerned citizen groups and college campuses. For info, on specific tapes available contact **WCVC**.

Home Rule: A series of tapes done in conjunction with a coalition of D.C. Video

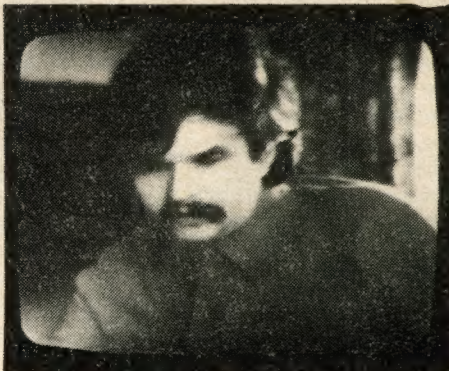
groups including: the **WCVC**, **CAFAM III**, **Project Accountability**, and **Anacostia Neighborhood Museum**. tapes deal with various aspects of the D.C. Home Rule legislation.

Community Park Tape: Grady and others have nearly finished a tape about the Shapiro tract, a privately owned space on Adams Mill Road which the community has been working to have purchased by the City for park and recreational space. The tape is a history of the struggle around the park for presentation to members of the Congress and others who could determine whether the parkland is bought. The project was initiated by **Ed Diggs** and **Liz Kaplan** and others working on the park project in **AMO** and features almost everyone having anything to do with the several-year history of the park.



Itself: A 15-minute tape **WCVC** made about "itself" in December. Explains the whole idea of neighborhood television and shows many of the projects we've done over the last 6 months.

Women's Self-Defense: **Vicki Costello** produced a 17-min. tape with members of the D.C. Rape Crisis Center on techniques of self-defense.



Stan Brakhage: An interview with the filmmaker, who is a central figure in the American independent film movement. He speaks of his vital concern with the "person" in his art as well as the problems faced by the artist in our society. Tape was done by **WCVC's** new staff member, **Gerardine Wurzburg** who will be doing a series of tapes on Wash. area artists in the coming year.

Health tapes: Two tapes to be produced this spring in conjunction with the **Washington Free Clinic**.

Women's Self-Help: A demonstration by the women's Health group of a pelvic exam and a diaphragm insertion. Also a discussion of the politics of gynecology.

Male V.D.: Discussion and demonstrations relating to VD in men, both gay and straight.

Training and screenings

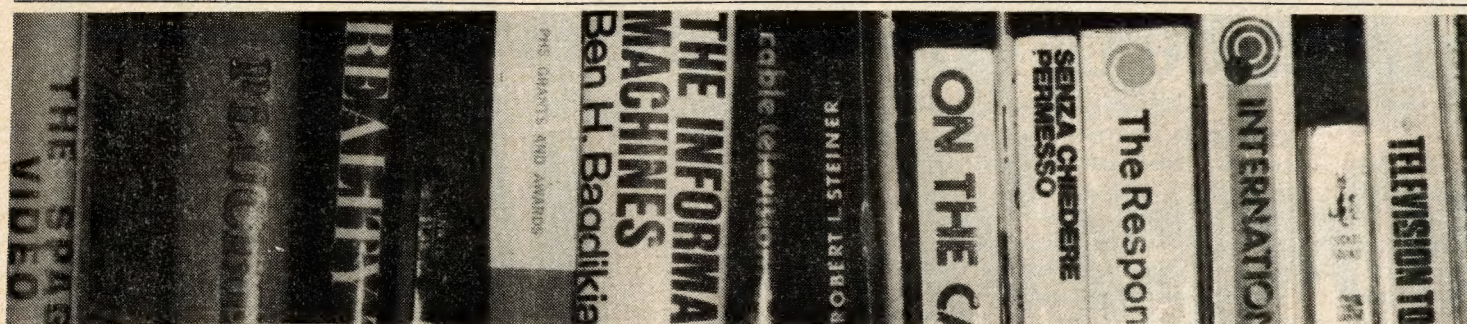
The Video Center has made available two levels of involvement in video for any individual and/or group interested. These

are the operation of an open viewing space for weekly video screenings and the offering of video training course.

The Thursday evening screenings are designed to be openly accessible to community groups who would like to present their concerns, via videotape and/or films, to other people. Programs can be built around relevant tapes from the Center's library or we can assist in locating tapes from other places. **WCVC** is also open to the possibilities of helping groups to make their own videotapes and to experiment with live video in aiding group dynamics. Call 462-6700 to use this service. **WCVC** has many tapes from other cities which are interesting to see. We can acquire other tapes for you, too!

Training courses in videotape production skills for beginner, intermediate and advanced students are offered periodically. The courses last for six sessions and cost \$50 for those who can afford to pay. For more information on training courses, screenings and tapes contact the **Washington Community Video Center**.





HARDWARE, cont.

The problem with this technology, as usual, is price. You can get one of two systems on the market for about \$9,000.

The CVS 504 (Consolidated Video Industries) combines the time-base correction and processing amplifier functions in one module and will correct Portapak, capstan servo (like the 3130, etc.) or one-inch tape. The CVS 500 will correct only one-inch. Microtime, Inc., has a corrector for black-and-white half-inch for about \$5,000, that includes no proc. amp., and will not correct all formats.

Since the cost is high for these units, shared access makes a lot of sense. When a CATV system exists, that is the logical focus perhaps. Groups working in communities where no CATV system yet exists should pressure the franchise authority for inclusion of TBC to insure cablecastability of half-inch.

If groups are working on broadcast access, the knowledge of these new technologies will completely deflate the arguments of broadcasters that community-produced programming is non broadcast-quality. Or, if a number of video groups can pool meagre resources, one unit might be used by many folks, difficult as that is to work out.

But, the reality is now here for much higher quality half-inch production for training, electronic journalism, documentary, and other use. As usual, it comes down to finding the money to make it happen.

Our thanks to Telemation East, Jim Fairbairns of Panasonic, and Jack Goldman of Technosphere in N.Y.

COALITION, cont.

Two functions are being served: FIRST—CITIZENS NOW HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION FROM THE SEMINAR UPON REQUEST. Second, but no less important, is the establishment of an inner-city distribution system for video at the community level. The DCVC has received a pledge from Jim Alexander, a close aide to Mayor Washington and program director for the D.C. Bicentennial Commission, for aid in further developing a video distribution system and to find support for its expanded use within the District government.

Other groups interested in joining the Coalition for purposes of expanding this citywide effort should contact any member.

The Home Rule tapes are now available from Larry Molumby at the D.C. Public Library. Call: 727-1186.

Project Accountability (727-2540), CAFAM III (667-1300), Anacostia Neighborhood Museum (889-1301), and Washington Community Video Center (462-6700).

Community Video Report

Volume 1, Number 3

Winter, 1974

A quarterly publication of the Washington Community Video Center, Inc., 2414 18th Street, NW, and P.O. Box 21068, Washington, DC, 20009. Phone: [202] 462-6700. Staff Collective: Nick DeMartino, Ray Popkin, Grady Watts, Gerardine Wurzburg. Other staff people: Vicki Costello, Marc Mannes, Steve Moss, Karen O'Brien, Carol Hodes, Ed Johnson.

Communications for Freedom Week at Howard

March 10-16 has been designated "Communications for Freedom Week" at Howard University. The week will feature a variety of sessions and workshops on different aspects of using communications in the Black community. One major section of this will be the "Black Careers in Communications Conference," which will bring together recruiters from various industries in the field of communications, as well as many prominent Blacks in the professions.

The keynote speaker for the Freedom Luncheon at noon on the 14th is the Hon. Benjamin Hooks, FCC Commissioner. At 8 p.m. on the 15th the Rev. Jesse Jackson, director of People United to Save Humanity (P.U.S.H.) will speak at the Liberation Awards Banquet and dance.

For further information and free registration forms, call the conference HQ, at 636-7945.

N.C.C.B. re-organized

The National Citizen's Coalition for Broadcasting (NCCB) has been re-organized and expanded with some funding and a new staff headed by former FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson. NCCB wants to become a national resource for non-profit, community service, and public interest groups who want to make the most open and effective use of the media. They will do this by spending the first year trying to ascertain the jobs that groups around the country think are priorities, as well as to publish a manual media action, begin a newsletter, and plan conferences. But mostly this first year, they are looking for ideas and asking you for input. If you would like to plug into this new and important network, call Chuck Shepherd and rap at (202) 466-8407, or write to be a contact at 1914 Sunderland Pl., NW, Washington, 20036.

N.C.T.A. in Chicago

The annual convention of the National Cable Television Association (NCTA) will be held at the Conrad Hilton Hotel in Chicago on April 21-24. This is the trade association that brings together just about everyone interested in cable television and related issues. As was done last year, a Public Access Environment featuring tapes and workshops by video people working in access will be set up, although no details have been finalized yet. If you are interested you can call Nick DeMartino at the WCVC or Brian Owens at the NCTA (202) 466-8111.

New reconsideration of F.C.C. cable rules?

When the FCC enacted the current cable television rules, they concurrently established two committees, one on technical questions, the other on the touchy issues involved in determining regulatory jurisdiction between the federal, state, and local authorities. This committee, almost entirely comprised of CATV industry people, submitted to the FCC a series of recommendations in a report last fall. This report has been lodged in the Cable Bureau for months. Sources in the Commission tell us that a staff report recommending to the Commission various rule-making procedures will be completed and ready to be placed on the Commissioners' agenda by the time Chairman Burch leaves in March or April.

This could mean a major reconsideration of the 1972 cable rules, and could result in the first opportunity for public input into the rules since the June 1972 reconsideration.

One area which may be considered is the area of utilizing a percentage of cable operators' gross revenues for funding public access by non-profit groups, an idea being pushed by Thea Sklover of New York's Open Channel. Whether the new and admittedly anti-cable Chairman Wiley will choose to put the cable report on the agenda is problematical. But keep your eyes open in the trade press for this major development.

REVIEWS, cont.

counter-insurgency issues. The Network Project, which is a collective of ex-Columbia radicals, has a different purpose in mind—to expose the soft white underbelly of the communications system. Needless to say, the NSF doesn't fund them. You can buy their work directly: 104 Earl Hall, Columbia University, New York 10027.

In the same spirit as the Network Project's work is a new book by Herbert Schiller, author of the excellent analysis of the global U.S. communications system, *Mass Communications and the American Empire*. The new volume, *The Mind Managers* (Boston: Beacon, 1973), focuses on the purposes, methods, and structures of the consciousness-manipulation industries. At the opposite pole from theorists like McLuhan who claim it is the technological medium which is the content, Schiller explains how the system of information control works in a post-industrial imperialist system. The analysis is sophisticated, proceeding from an examination of the kinds of myths (the content) which the manipulators use to make the system work, to the precise methods utilized in the various components—the knowledge industry, the government, recreation and entertainment, polling industry, advertising, publishing, radio and TV. He concludes with a provocative essay questioning whether new communications technologies will be democratizing force in a society which is dominated by the mind managers. Highly recommended.

Final items: the best, cheapest, and most fun way to sum up the year in communications is the *Variety* annual. Studded with those absurd headlines, this newsprint compendium sells for a buck (!), from 154 W. 46th St., New York 10036.

Metro cable round-up

In updating the Metro-Cable Round Up in the last issue of the Newsletter, we have found some new developments in a few areas, and the situation relatively unchanged in most.

In Montgomery County five task forces have been formed in the fields of education, health, commerce, community affairs and government. The council has held several public forums and hearings and an educational program on WETA-TV Malarkey-Taylor and Associates was chosen as consultant, and will issue a final report by March 15. The county is considering various forms of ownership, with municipal ownership not yet ruled out.

In Rockville, according to Asst. City Mgt. Larry Blick, the issue is "on the back burner" right now, mostly because of a narrow vote in the council to delay drafting an ordinance. Mitre was hired as consultant in 1973, and found the economic feasibility of a cable system "marginal."

College Park is in the process of drafting an ordinance, with three applications still pending from a city request for applications last summer; the three groups involved are Fred Ford's group, College Park Cablevision, Inc. and Prince George's Community Cable. There seems to be a conflict of interests between College Park and Prince George's County which is "trying to keep its 28 self-governing municipalities with a country system." The county has hired Checchi and Co. as consultant, and expects to receive their 2-2½ month report soon.

In Ann Arundel County, Amvideo, Inc. has won the franchise and is presently in "make-ready" stages of building the system, which should be in operation by early summer. The system will have 30 channels and cover 200 miles, with a 25,000 subscriber potential. It has not yet been determined how much programming will be of local origination, and how much will come from Annapolis. Some facilities will be available for access, but, again, to what extent has not yet been determined.

In March 1973, Arlington County awarded a franchise certificate to the Arlington Telecommunications Corporation (ARTEC) but has not as yet received a Certificate of Compliance from the FCC.

Objections have been filed by local television stations, and other objections to the provisions of the ordinance have delayed FCC processing.

It is yet to be ascertained whether the delay is damaging to ARTEC which may in fact benefit from delayed construction.

Alexandria, in keeping with its schedule, will be holding a public hearing on its regulatory ordinance which they call "a good one, a strong one." Final reading and passage is expected March 23.

There is some feeling that cable is not economically feasible in Alexandria although a legislative framework will probably be provided for potential franchisers. One group, led by former FCC commissioner Fred Ford, have expressed interest.

Fairfax County's ordinance will be reviewed by the County Attorney's office until the end of the month, to be sure it complies with the FCC's rules.

In Baltimore City, Office of Telecommunications Chief Marvin Rimmerman is working primarily on radio frequency allocations, and the staff is preparing a booklet on cable for the public.

Another cable TV bill has been introduced into the Maryland legislature to give the state jurisdiction over franchising, but stands little chance of passage.

**Carol Hodes
Karen O'Brien
Ed Johnson**

Theory and practice of community video

[Continued from p. 1]

night, 8 p.m. Weekly video features. No commercials. See your friends and yourself on TV, video demonstrations, cable TV discussions, open screenings—bring tapes."

We were inviting an audience to come help us create an experience using media. And they have been coming now for many months. Each week is different, depending upon what the programmer emphasizes, how we advertise, who shows up, what they want to get into, and so forth. We maintain this open video night on Thursdays and the video process is lively and varied. The most effective have been with groups that are organized for other reasons and are motivated to come and participate. In November we taped the first annual Adams-Morgan football classic and showed the tapes to the Ontario Lakers team and their friends in a video environment. Mass Transit, a local poetry workshop, came in for a reading and everyone videoed everyone else.

The process tape also builds self-esteem and a sense of personal value. Television is the determinant of what is "news" and what is "important." Seeing yourself on it makes you seem more important, and, more "real" (and Walter Cronkite becomes correspondingly less important and less real). We have discovered working with kids from the inner city that video can help create a counter-image to the negative one which is encouraged by their physical and media environments.

And, for adults, these kinds of realizations lead to greater questions about the functioning of the "regular" TV. Literally every time we have ever used video in a group situation people have asked why this can't go on TV. This is the first step in *de-mystifying* the media, the first step in creating the consciousness that will "create safeguards against mind manipulation of the majority by small privileged minorities," as Herbert Schiller points out in *The Mind Managers*.

If process video has value, it also has limitations. First, and foremost, is the fact that most of these tapes are only valuable for participants. When newcomers begin to use the cameras, which is essential to give them control over information, they seldom use it well. Moreover, lighting and sound are usually as bad as the camera work. From a purely technical stand-point, nobody wants to be bored by a crummy quality videotape.

In addition, most of the people involved in this sort of video turn-on have little desire to become video producers, or to invest the time and energy necessary to make an entire communications process happen with others outside their own friends. After all, being taped once is a fairly superficial activity. But it is necessary for every beginner to get past the phase of fascination with his or her own image on the tube, as well as the almost universal fear and mistrust of the hardware. Thus, we include the video experience as an early part of any training or teaching at the Center, and we try to take into account that the process is always the priority for the beginner.

After the familiarity wears off, the individual or group that wants to go beyond the superficial begins to enlarge his concept of video's usefulness.

Each involvement with video deepened his understanding something which occurs experientially, not intellectually, system, a method of reaching an audience.

Most people in our community don't have enough time, interest, or inclination to take responsibility for a media process or to really exercise the access available to them. *But, when media is being used in a familiar context that involves them and their friends, and a method is used that clearly serves their needs and has positive results, they know it, and they will support it. When media doesn't fulfill needs, they will mistrust it, and they will mistrust the people doing it, (just as they do existing broadcast media).*

Product Video

"Product" video is the term we use to describe a tape which can stand alone, one which doesn't require the viewer to have been involved in making the tape. This doesn't mean the elimination of feedback, since the "process" now includes several steps beyond the video experience itself, as we will see. Nor does "product" video refer to the kind of pre-packaged television fare we all know and love.

Because video products are prepared in advance for presentation to groups, distribution of these messages to an audience must be considered just as high a priority as the way the tape is produced and the content of the message. Electronic products, like goods, must have a distribution system, a method of reaching an audience.

The most familiar, and for community video people, the least accessible distribution system is broadcast television that goes into everyone's home. Cable television is important, perhaps the most viable method of distributing messages to people, but less than 10% of the nation's homes are wired for cable, and most of these are not in large cities where video activity is concentrated. Other, newer tech-

nologies are even less widespread: multipoint distribution systems, direct satellite transmission, microwave transmission.

Thus, the most accessible and flexible way to get the message out is by closed-circuit television (CCTV), which is the primary method that we currently use for showing videotapes in our project.

However, closed-circuit TV, like the other forms, are only a technique for reaching an audience. Herein lies the primary consideration in creating product video: Who is the intended audience; how will I reach them; what is the context of the viewing environment; what is my goal in showing them video; and, importantly, what kind of feedback is possible?

These important questions are rarely, if ever asked by media practitioners. We have learned to make it a requirement that such questions are determined *before* a tape is shot. Far too many of our early video efforts involved endless shooting of "important" events which have since gathered dust because nobody had the interest to edit the raw tape or work on the distribution and feedback problems.

So often people come in to the Center and suggest making a tape. We ask, "Who will see it?" "Oh, you know, the people who see all your tapes," they say. They seem genuinely surprised to discover that there is no regular audience developed that sees all our tapes. And until an audience is specified and the method of bringing them together with the tape is identified, we have no way of analyzing the proposed idea.

Another assumption that is made by people is the existence of some sort of national network to distribute for videotapes. "don't you sell your tapes across the country?" they ask. We wish we could, but, as anyone in video will tell you, each tape must be individually handled, since no real ready-made system exists even to the extent of the independent film market.

Many efforts have been made for tape exchange and purchase networks among video producers, starting with the first few issues of *Radical Software* in 1970-71, but nobody has ever been into functioning as a central clearinghouse and distribution structure, as it has always come down to individual contacts and arrangements. We are still relying on this approach to acquire software for our video theatre.

Commercially, we had once hoped to distribute tapes to institutional users like libraries, universities, business and government groups either on half-inch or in three-quarter-inch cassette, but the current market is oriented toward transfers of slick color films and tapes, not locally produced half-inch stuff.

By insisting that the people pin down their method of playback or distribution and their audience, we don't want to sound like every tape must be rigidly planned. There must always be room for spontaneity and experimentation.

One of the best pieces of video work I have ever seen was done by Phil Brady and his co-workers at Project Accountability. His group had heard that some people in a public housing project were angry because of poor garbage pick-up and bad sanitation service from the city. They took a PortaPak over to the project and started rapping with folks. Before long the people decided that they would do something about the problem—that they would go dump their garbage at the local housing officials' offices. Police were called, and they were brutal and beat on women, some of them pregnant. The video people, who had the confidence of the community, taped much of the whole thing, and continued taping interviews with injured residents, police,



officials, and bystanders, both on the scene, at the police station and elsewhere. The tapes were held in reserve for the tenants' use, and were later edited into a powerful "product" tape that documents the process of the community action. No such tape could ever be planned.

But, by the same token, too many people presume that having video equipment means that *everything* that is interesting to *anyone* must be taped. How many tapes of speakers and demonstrations and conferences would you be willing to watch?

And, even if you would be interested in watching a given tape, would anyone else? If so, how do you connect up that audience with the tape? Without cable or broadcast TV going direct into a home, we are forced to either bring a tape to the audience, or vice-versa. Thus, publicity becomes crucial—telling people about it by word-of-mouth, through existing informal or formal channels, or via the media. This is an enormously time-consuming and difficult task.

Even so, CCTV has an advantage over most other existing TV media in its natural capacity for immediate feedback. When I show a videotape I made to a group of people, I not only can hear their suggestions, criticisms, and feedback, but I can see their physical response and the action which the tape initiates. This is impossible with mass media, even though two-way cable and telephone-linked broadcast TV make some sort of feedback feasible.

Target audience is difficult

Producing tapes with a structured target audience is a lengthy and difficult process. Project Accountability, which used a combination of live and taped television over broadcast TV last year to focus their community's attention on the issues of housing, worked in the community for months before ever writing a script or shooting an inch of tape.

We initiated a project with the city government to tape community leaders showing environmental hazards in the 14th St. corridor and analyzing the city's role in those failures. We then showed the tapes weekly to a group of city officials and taped their response. This was a careful, targeted feedback process aimed at getting results in 14th Street, and changing the procedures of the city government. Three staff people worked at least three days a week, plus all the time of the community leaders, who did the research and on-camera work.

In a sense, these sort of video "products" are hard to isolate from the concept of video process. It's just that the feedback loop encompasses a larger number of components. One distinction, however, ought to be quality. When we want a tape to have a desired impact, the viewer must be able to see and hear everything. That doesn't mean that video is useless if it doesn't look like NBC. But it requires certain skills that must be learned. It requires a perception of the medium and an understanding of the limitations of technology being used.

For this reason, we usually insist that our limited equipment resources be utilized by people who know what they are doing. We offer low-cost introductory video training workshops at the Center and operate an intern program for people who want to get more involved in the work we do. Other programs are designed to involve people with fewer skills at a level they can handle.

As Schiller points out, "new communications technology, as it becomes cheaper and more available, makes it possible for relatively large numbers of individuals to become knowledgeable in media practices and routines. This may not result in immediate professional expertise, but it helps demystify the medium for a significant number of people; equally important, it begins to provide the basis for a new corps of trained individuals, capable of handling some of the now-ignored informational needs of the nation's communities."

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